

Recap:

- Galatians is about both Jews and Gentiles being saved by grace through faith. It is not about personal salvation, except in a secondary sense.
 - the first couple chapters were essentially Paul pleading his credentials as a genuine apostle in his own right with a gospel of grace through faith – a gospel that knows no distinction between Jew and gentile. And he recounts how he defended that gospel against Peter and others who were essentially saying you had to be a Jew first in order to be a Christian.
 - In chapter three Paul turns his attention to the Galatians and lambasts them for reverting to this reactionary version of the gospel. “Who has bewitched you?” he asks, before reminding them that all those who believe are equally the descendants of Abraham.
 - Then in chapter four he takes it a step further by arguing that actually those who live by faith are the true children of Isaac (Abraham’s favored son), whose birth was a miracle and a fulfillment of Abraham’s faith. Those who live by the law (the Jews) are actually the metaphorical children of Ishmael who was born “according to the flesh.”
- Which brings us to Chapter five, where Paul discusses what that means for Christian life and practice. Now we are talking ethics. After another rant against those who were insisting on circumcision (“they should castrate themselves!”)
- The “New Perspective on Paul”
 - Before we jump into Galatians five I want to take a step back and look at a broader question of how we as protestants tend to read Paul. Broadly, following from the reformers and especially Martin Luther, we tend to read Paul as though he is talking about individual faith. The importance of us as individuals having faith in Jesus and relying on God’s grace for our salvation, instead of our own works. For protestants we tend to take that as an unexamined presupposition, and we instinctively read Paul that way. So for example, in Galatians 3:26 Paul says, that we are all children of God through faith. So we as protestants say: “boy, I’d better have faith in Jesus.”
 - But there is another way of reading Paul, called the “new perspective” which is that Paul is almost never talking about personal salvation. What he is talking about is groups of people, specifically Jews and Gentiles. A theological way of putting it is that Paul is talking about **ecclesiology**. The doctrine of the church. Not **soteriology**: the doctrine of salvation.
 - So going back to Galatians 3:26, the point is not that we should have faith. The point is that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by faith. And that becomes clear as we read on to verses 2:16 we assume Paul is talking about personal justification I’m not saying that’s wrong, but there is another 27-29.

A Short Detour into Romans

- Romans 1:16-17: this is how he introduces the book. And we tend to gloss over the “first for the Jew, then for the gentile” bit and immediately, like Martin Luther, focus in on the soteriological bit that we are saved by faith. But actually the Jew and Gentile bit is the main point.
 - The rest of Chapter 1 is aimed at the greeks (note the vice list in vs 29-31)
 - Then chapter 2-3 is aimed at the Jews and then we get to:
- Romans 3:22-23 - The point here, is that “All” - both Jews and Gentiles - stand condemned.
 - So again. This is the kind of thing that a protestant might typically think of as focused on the individual. I could imagine a preacher saying. Look - you, Jim, Kathy, Judy, Warren, you have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Repent and believe. Come up to this alter, each of you, and confess your sins.

- There is no harm in that, but that is not what Paul is focused on. The takeaway for him is that since we are all saved in the same way, we should be united. We are one in Jesus - all of us.
- Romans 8:28 - implications for the doctrine of election: God is electing, or “predestining” both the Jews and Gentiles to have equal access (through faith) and status in his kingdom of grace. It is not about electing some individuals for glory and others for perdition.
- Romans 12:1-3 - implications for ethics - An ethic of love based on equality before God and an equivalent distribution of divine gifts by God.

Galatians Five

- 1-12: What does Paul mean by “faith working through love” in vs 6?
- 13-15: What is the problematic question Paul is addressing here? And how does he address it?
- 16-21: What does Paul mean by “Spirit” and “Flesh” here? What is going on in vs. 18? How does this observation about the law follow from verses 16-17?
- 22-26: After listing the fruits of the Spirit, Paul again makes an observation about the law. Why?
- The “works of flesh” are mostly behaviors and the “fruits of the spirit” are attitudes. Is that significant?